

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Meeting

Tuesday, July 11, 2006

Small group notes

Likes

(Groups 2 & 7)

- Neighborhood input into future of neighborhood
- Opportunity to give neighborhood a voice
- "Grass roots"
- Citizen friendly
- Helps to establish a sense of place
- Promotes positive reinvestment
- Helps to preserve inner-city neighborhoods

(Groups 10, 6 & 4)

- Community members have impact in neighborhood development
- Democratic process
- Potential to eliminate odd situations
- Keep consistency in neighborhood
- Not a Historic District Overlay
- Can be small in size

(Groups 3, 5 & 9)

- No radical changes into the neighborhood
- Members of the neighborhood have input
- Improving property values
- Control characteristics
- Maintaining identity
- Can tailor neighborhoods
- New construction compatible
- Less restrictive than a historic district
- Brings up value of the neighborhood that are deteriorating (e.g. absentee neighborhoods)
- Developers know what is expected
- Protects from bad neighborhood design
- Process involves a lot of neighborhood input

(Groups 1 & 8)

- Fair and consistent
- Works with all property owners
- Promotes existing neighborhood character
- Preserves neighborhood integrity
- Done in context with a neighborhood plan
- Guidelines don't control routine maintenance (painting, etc.)
- When you move into the area, you know what is expected

Concerns

(Groups 2 & 7)

- 51% is too high for approval
- 51% is too low for approval
- Have to present to Planning Board and Zoning Commission
- Not enough information presented to public
- Meeting held in a season when few people are in town
- Enough City staff to facilitate program
- Process is not friendly to neighborhood association volunteers (arduous, obstacles)
- Time consuming
- Difficult, too many hurdles that are too high
- More communication needed to the public about this ordinance
- Make sure process, ordinance and guidelines are citizen friendly
- Make it feasible to establish an overlay
- Interim changes while a neighborhood is in the process of establishing an NCO (need a building freeze)
- Fees for establishing an NCO- zoning fees should be waived

(Groups 10, 6 & 4)

- Could prohibit expansion
- 25% is too low
- Overzealous neighborhoods create too restrictive (guidelines) and regret later
- Too unknown- recreating zoning regulations
- Unrealistic restrictions that inhibit redevelopment
- Application requirement should be 51%
- Approval of NCO should be higher than 51%
- Confused with historic district
- Needs to be a final approval of guidelines by neighborhood property owners
- How to identify property owners

(Groups 3, 5 & 9)

- Impacts development
- High percentage of absent landlords with petition requirement- absent landlords can squash it
- Could be more restrictive than a Historic District Overlay
- Petition process can be labor extensive and use up valuable neighborhood resources
- City Council has last say
- Why sign a petition before you know what guidelines are?
- Property owners creating guidelines with lack of land use knowledge
- Another layer of bureaucracy
- Could be more divisive
- How does this affect churches or other uses allowed in residential zoning?
- How to amend overlay
- May not be substantial for neighborhood
- Confusion over intent
- Too restrictive for family heirlooms (land)
- May not have City Council support
- Length of process

- With low home owner occupancy, too hard to get it done
- Subjectivity and compatibility

(Groups 1 & 8)

- What is the extent of what is covered? (building materials- what does maintenance mean?) [vinyl siding to cover lead based paint]
- 51% is not a large enough majority- should be 2/3 – 75%
- Restrictions on architectural style or infill where needed (new construction)
- 100% of owners should agree before approval
- If the NCO changes during the process, can original petitioner change their mind/ give approval?
- Neighborhoods like Glenwood with 70% rental who want this can't implement unless its attractive to landlords
- Will this prevent an area from being upgraded (newer houses being built)?
- There are more questions than answers being given

Questions

(Groups 2 & 7)

- Mechanism for changing boundaries?
- How does an NCO affect an existing property?
- How are neighborhood businesses affected?- areas like Walker & Elam within a neighborhood
- What is regulated?
- What are the benefits of a NCO?
- How many characteristics does a neighborhood need to become an NCO?
- What are the fees?

(Groups 10, 6 & 4)

- Can a Historic District have a NCO?
- Multiple NCOs in an area?
- Purpose of NCO?
- Is there a removal process?
- How do you know there is an overlay district?
- Is a NCO retroactive?
- Will this gentrify neighborhoods?
- Will this process divide a neighborhood?

(Groups 3, 5 & 9)

- What does this cover and not cover?
- How restrictive is restrictive?
- Will this create divisions in neighborhoods? by income levels, etc?
- How would this create wide representation in the neighborhood? a.k.a. few die hards not with the neighborhoods?

(Groups 1 & 8)

- Shouldn't there be a larger number of homeowners approving of the NCO?
- If you have a block within a neighborhood that doesn't want to be included, can they opt out?
- Will the neighbors be notified about what, if any, financial obligations might be applicable?
- Are there examples of forms?
- Is there 1 vote per owner or is it by lot?
- Why is the word "residents" used instead of "owner"?
- Once a NCO is in place in a neighborhood, can changes be made?
- Define property owners?